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Research Request Received: THE TIMOR SITUATION – REPORT FROM INDONESIA

Te Uwer attentie, op verzoek van
Ramos-Horta, vert. Fretilin.
PSP-fractie

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Note: In view of the sensitive nature of this report, recipients are asked not to disclose its source.

IN CONFIDENCE

THE TIMOR SITUATION - REPORT FROM INDONESIA

A brief report, entitled "Notes on East Timor", has been received from a Catholic organization in Indonesia, which is concerned with humanitarian relief operations. Although the report is couched in guarded language and provides few details about the situation in East Timor, it is a significant and disturbing document. In general the picture which emerges from this report is consistent with other recent reports on the situation in East Timor from both Fretilin and non-Fretilin sources. The document presents a grim picture of the situation in East Timor. Particularly disturbing, is the account of the death toll. The authors of the report stated that they had considered the initial reports that 60,000 people had been killed in East Timor to be "rather high", but in Dili two priests told them that the fact the figure of people killed in Timor may have reached 100,000. If we accept the International Red Cross assessment that before the Indonesian invasion only some 2,000 people had been killed in the fighting in the territory, it follows that since 7 December last year the Indonesians have been responsible for the killing of perhaps as much as 15% of the population of the territory. True, Fretilin would have been responsible for some killing, but any suggestion that Fretilin might have been responsible for more than a small fraction of the total, is inconsistent with the popularity the resistance movement evidently enjoys. The report from Indonesia notes, by way of example, that of the 5,000 people who welcomed Indonesian troops at Ermera, only 1,000 now remain in the town, the others having joined Fretilin in the mountains.

The report states that all villages and towns in East Timor are occupied by Indonesian military forces, but that beyond the villages and towns the territory is not under their control. It notes that land communication "had been disrupted" and that the only means of transportation was by helicopter or by sea around the coast. It is stated that "80% of the territory is not under the direct control of the Indonesian military forces". The report

refers to the misbehaviour of the Indonesian occupying forces, whom it accuses of "stealing, robbery, burning houses, violating girls, etc., etc.". It notes that there has been a decline in support for "integration" because of these excesses. This information accords with another report received late in August in which the Catholic Bishop of Timor, Bishop Ribeiro, commented on the misbehaviour of the Indonesian troops and the fact that the Timorese were very "sceptical and anxious about completing integration". The report under study mentioned that many of the population have moved into the mountains to evade Indonesian control. It suggested that 500,000 people were not under their control and that this made it extremely difficult to initiate a rehabilitation program. The report noted that the East Timor Government (i.e. the administration under Governor Arnaldo dos Reis Araujo) is "without any authority" and is merely a "puppet government for the military commander".

Fretilin was referred to by the report as a Communist Party, perhaps reflecting the description given the authors by authorities in Dili. They noted, however, that Fretilin "treated the people well now and do not offend them in their believe (sic)". It was reported that Fretilin attempted to maintain a high level of discipline and that the Timorese soldiers were working the farms. This was interpreted as tactics designed to win over the people. The report recorded some comments heard in Timor. They included: "In the Fretilin there are Communists, but among the Indonesian troops there are more Communists"; and: "If there should be held a real referendum the people will choose Fretilin".

Fretilin's military tactics were briefly referred to in this report. It was stated that Fretilin troops avoided frontal attack or engagements with the Indonesian forces, and they sought not to raid villages where Indonesian troops were stationed. Fretilin troops were carrying out a guerrilla war. Another interesting point was that Fretilin still had access to the sea on the south coast. The report stated that it was "rumoured that (Fretilin) got supplies (men and material) from Australia". The report referred to a rumour that Indonesia would start using Napalm "because they cannot win the war otherwise". It also reported that Indonesia had instructed that the "Stalin organ", a multiple

rocket launcher, be used in Timor. In fact, during the past two months, Fretilin messages have referred to rocket attacks by Indonesian troops.

The report gives some information on political parties but it may be that this refers to an earlier period, as officially parties no longer exist in East Timor. It suggests that UDT has the support of about 40% of the people, Apodeti 20% and Fretilin 25%. It speaks of about 20 or 30 real Communists among the leadership of Fretilin and refers to them as men who came from "the Lisbon University in Portugal". In fact only one or two of the 45 member central committee of Fretilin had been to Lisbon University and none of the leaders were members of the Communist Party.

This report referred briefly to the Church in East Timor. It said there were 31 priests in the Territory, 15 of them native priests. It also stated that 6 priests, 2 Portuguese, 1 Indian and 3 native, were "known to be held by the Fretilin in the mountains". A number of priests are believed to be with Fretilin, but this does not of course mean that they are being held against their will. In fact, recent information from Darwin suggested that an ordained Timorese priest had emerged as one of the leaders of the Fretilin organization. The "Indian priest" referred to in the report could be a Goan, Father Monteiro, who was very popular with Fretilin leaders. The report from Indonesia also referred to "domestic refugees" who were said to be peasants from border regions in West Timor, who had been forced to flee because of Fretilin raids into Indonesian Timor. This report gives credence to information contained in Fretilin messages during the past two months or so, which have suggested that the Indonesian troops were doing badly in their attempt to gain control of territories near the border, particularly the area between Bobonaro and Suai.

The information contained in this report adds substantially to the mounting evidence that the Indonesians have been carrying out a brutal operation in East Timor, involving indiscriminate killing on a scale unprecedented in post World War II history, and that they are continuing to meet extensive resistance, despite their overwhelming superiority in numbers and weapons. With monsoon conditions having returned to Timor (and these will continue until May next year) it will now be very difficult for the Indonesians to extend the areas under their control, let alone destroy Fretilin. The suggestion in this report that Indonesians are considering the use of napalm is a matter of particular concern. In a land of palapa villages the effect of napalm on the already suffering population would be devastating. As the situation stands, if the figure of 100,000 deaths is accurate, Indonesia's "integration" of East Timor must go on record as, relatively speaking, the bloodiest act of annexation since the second World War. The fact that this report has been obtained from a responsible organization in Jakarta, which would have little sympathy for Fretilin as a party, suggests that there is much disquiet in Indonesia about the Timor affair. Indeed, the possibility that the full story will eventually be disclosed by the Indonesians themselves cannot be ruled out - perhaps as part of a political move by one military group against the Suharto Government, or more specifically against Ali Moertopo and General Moerdani, the architects of "Operasi Komodo". The information contained in this report from Jakarta, and other reports received from similar sources during the past three months, present a grim picture of the humanitarian situation in East Timor, resulting from the territory's "integration". It may be that the rights of the Timorese to determine their own future is an irretrievably lost cause, but, if other basic human rights have been disregarded as inhumanly and blatant as this and other reports suggest, the Indonesian Government would be wrong to assume that world reaction to "Operasi Komodo" has now subsided.

NOTES ON EAST TIMOR

1. THE PRIEST

There are 31 priests in East Timor :
- 15 Native priests
- 16 Priests of foreign nationalities

Note : 2 Portuguese, 1 Indian and 3 native priest are known to be held by the Fretelin in the mountain. Nobody knows about their well being.

Wether priests of foreign nationalities will stay and work in East-Timor is an open question but it is believed that some priests will leave for Portugal.

2. THE PEOPLE

One third of the population had been baptized Catholic. The rest, however, claimed themselves to be Catholic. At the moment many want to be baptized because they heard in the other parts of Indonesia, everybody mush have a religion.

3. DILLI

The total town people of Dilli is 30,000. 20,000 of them have now registered themselves for passage to Portugal. Others are with the Fretelin in the mountains so that in fact the real town people of Dilli numbers only a couple of thousands not counting the Indonesian soldiers.

4. POLITICAL SITUATION

- All villages and towns in East Timor are occupied by the Indonesian military forces. Beyond the villages and towns there is no main land. And the safety is not guaranted because of the Fretilin raids.

- The total population of villages and towns occupied by the Indonesian forces amounts to 150,000 people. Taking the total population of East Timor of 650,000 people into consideration it means that 500,000 people is not under their control.

- Land communication has been disrupted. The only means of transportation is helicopter or sea route.

- About the territory : 80% of the territory is not under direct control of the Indonesian military forces.

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5. DEAD TOLL

According to report, 60,000 people had been killed during the war. We found this figure rather high, because it means 10% of the total population of East Timor. But when I asked two Fathers in Dilli they replied that according to their estimate the figure of people killed may reach to 100,000.

6. POLITICAL PARTIES

As Dilli sees it :

± 25% are members of Fretelin. (But the top leaders who are the real Communist are only 20 - 30 in numbers. They all came from the Lisbon University in Portugal).

± 40.50 % are U.D.T. (Democratic Party)

± 20.25 % are Apodeti.

When the Fretelin came into force the UDT and Apodeti joined together for integration with Indonesia. The Fretelin was at that time an independent party although most of their leaders are Communists. Later it become real Communist.

7. INTEGRATION

- The desire to integrate with Indonesia is beginning to cool off because of bad experience with the occupying forces. (stealing, robbery, burning houses, violating girls etc.).

- An example :
5000 people welcome the Indonesian troops in Ermera (Demonstration for integration). Now there are only 1000 people in Amaru, others joined the Fretelin in the mountains.

- If this is an exceptional case, then it will be not so bad, but if this is a symptom of the real situation, than it is very bad.

8. REHABILITATION

- At present it is very difficult to start rehabilitation program because the people we intended to help are still in the mountains.

- A teacher school might be an important subject but there are no pupils or only a very few.

- The other possiblity that looks promising is the language course. Father da Costa plans to open the language course in September or December. But the house that Father da Costa has kept ready for the course was taken by the military.

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9. THE GOVERNMENT

- The East Timor government is without any authority. It is only a puppet government for the military commander.

- The new Governor promised to build a big new mosque for the few Moslem in Dilli. Before the war their number was about 300. Now there a lot of Moslem soldiers.

10. THE FRETELIN

It appeared that the Fretelin has changed it tactic to win the people. They treated the people well now and do not offend them in their believe. They tried to keep their discipline high. The Fretelin soldiers are cultivating land now and make gardens.
Some comments heard in passing :

- " In the Fretelin there are Communists, but among the Indonesian troops there are more Communists " -

- " There are good people in the Indonesian troops, but many of them are bad soldiers " -

- " If there should be held a real referendum people will choose Fretelin " -

11. WEAPON

- It is rumoured that Indonesia will start using napalm , because they can not win the war otherwise.

- Last week Indonesia ordered Stalin organ to back their purpose.

12. THE FRETELIN STRATEGY

They evade frontal attack or engagement with the Indonesian troops, or raid village where there are Indonesian troops. They employ guerilla war pattern. When they are out on raid for food and material they often sent mothers with children first, followed by older people then young villagers and at the rear the Fretelin, as much as six or ten. The Fretelin keep watch while the villagers steal and rob.

The Fretelin has access to the sea on the south coast, facing Australia. It is rumoured that they got supply (men and material) from Australia.

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13. DOMESTIC REFUGEES

The domestic refugees are farmers from the border region in Timor Indonesia. They fled their home because of the frequent Fretelin raids. They lost their houses and gardens and live in a very poor shelters. The help the Indonesia given to them is poorly managed.
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14. ACTION FOR HELP

- The Indonesian government helps with thousand tons of rice.
- The East Timor refugees received dish money Rp.100.- per person per day. But the help for the domestic refugees is far from sa- [illegible] with many leakages.

15. As far as we could we try to help the people by conducting a rehabilitation program. We have the following program on our schedule:

- [illegible] tractors, to be used in the Maliana plain, for food production. We have already contacted Misereor for help.
- Purchasing 200 ton corn seeds for next year planting time. We have already made contact with German Veritas Vereni for this program.
- Repairning printing-machine inDilli. Our contact for this matter is LPPS and CRS Jakarta.
- To solve land transportation problem we need two trucks. Request for help has been sent to Misereor.
- We like to have representatives in the rehabilitation area. Request for help was sent to CRS.

In the meantime our help for the refugees both the East Timor and the domestic refugees still continues.

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